

Executive Summary

King County is 2,134 square miles of diverse terrain with almost 1.7 million people, 39 cities, over 100 other taxing districts (fire, school, water/sewer, etc.), and over 500 elected officials. The county faces periodic river valley and urban flooding events, earthquakes, severe weather, hazardous materials releases, and transportation accidents, and it has the potential to be affected by volcanic and terrorist activity.

State law requires that cities and counties have emergency programs, but provides only minimal guidance to special purpose districts, businesses, and non-profits. State statutes offer minimal guidance on multi-disciplinary or multi-jurisdictional disaster responses. The population density, complex system of governance, and significant risks we face (for both natural and technological disasters) create the need to plan for a coordinated response among public and private entities in the county.

The Regional Policy Committee of King County, comprised of elected officials from Seattle, Suburban Cities, and King County, passed a motion in October, 1998, that initiated development of a regional disaster plan for King County. This Regional Disaster Plan for Public and Private Organizations in King County provides the framework needed to inter-link the emergency response plans of a wide range of organizations. By conveying “who is going to do what” among all public and private organizations, this plan allows potentially hundreds of entities to behave in a coordinated manner following a severe disruption.

The process for creating this plan involved representatives from local government, specific emergency functions, schools, private sector, hospitals, and other stakeholder groups.

The plan emphasizes collaborative response operations, capitalizing on geographical coordination within the County already utilized by fire and emergency medical services. The goal is to streamline the information necessary to assess county-wide impacts of disaster and increase the speed and efficiency of the relief effort.

Activation of this plan may be for an intense, localized event, or a widespread regional or catastrophic event. It is intended to be activated in conjunction with other state and local emergency plans. Mutual Aid Agreements are still the “first line of defense” for plan participants. Because mutual aid (sharing with “like” agencies) may be unavailable during regional disasters, the plan defines the legal and financial ground rules for resource sharing among plan.

The Regional Disaster Plan for Public and Private Organizations in King County is being designed using the model of the Federal Response Plan; i.e. basic plan followed by a series of “Emergency Support Functions” such as communications and transportation. The Regional Policy Committee has provided its endorsement of the work completed on the Omnibus Legal and Financial Agreement and early drafts of several Emergency Support Functions.

The Regional Disaster Planning Task Force has developed three other documents as part of the initial phase of planning work. This “Basic Plan Package” includes:

- The Omnibus Legal and Financial Agreement
- The “Basic Plan”
- The Basic Plan’s Appendix 1: Direction and Coordination, and
- Emergency Support Function 7: Resource Support.

This initial “Basic Plan Package” will be sent to participating organizations for their signatures.

Changes to the Omnibus Agreement, the Basic Plan, the Plan’s Appendices, or any ESFs will be developed by the Task Force and then reviewed and approved by the Emergency Management Advisory Committee prior to being sent to participating organizations for their endorsement.

Following the initial Basic Plan Package, other Emergency Support Functions, or ESFs, for the Regional Plan will be developed. The Task Force has selected four ESFs as their priority for the remainder of 2001:

- *Health and Medical Services*
- *Communications*
- *Transportation*
- *Debris Management*

These ESFs will be submitted to all participating entities for review and approval as they are developed.

Participation in the Regional Disaster Plan is voluntary and its success will be dependent upon widespread endorsement of various cities and organizations throughout the County.